

Minutes
Computer Science and Technology in Public School Task Force
June 8, 2105
The Venture Center
107 E. Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201

Dr. James Hendren (Chair) called the meeting of the Computer Science and Technology in Public School Task Force (CSTTF) to order at 1:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Mr. Tom Chilton, Mr. Gary Dowdy, Mr. Carl Frank, Dr. James Hendren, Mr. David Hopkins, Mr. Andy Mayes, Dr. Suzanne Mitchell and Mr. Dave Wengel.

Dr. Tim Atkinson, Mr. Daryl Bassett, Dr. Charisse Childers, Dr. John James, Mr. Johnny Key, Mr. Rasesh Patel and Dr. Brett Powell were absent.

Dr. Hendren recognized the following industry representatives for comments:

1. Mr. Paul Grower; Principal Consultant, Lunamark
2. Mr. Richard Smith: Chief Technology Officer, ABC Financial
3. Ms. Allison Nicholas; College Recruiting/University Relations, Acxiom
4. Mr. Rob Brakensiek; Director – Implementations & Project Services, Euronet Software Division

The following comments were noted:

There are specific things industry is looking for in applicants including do you want to work for our company? Do you consider yourself a good fit and do you possess necessary skills to succeed?

Industry hires people who:

- Have business understanding
- Are able to think outside of the box
- Can code
- Asks during interviews why they want to work “here” for “me”
- Are well rounded individuals

Industry is looking for hard core programmers but mainly focus on a “hybrid” computer science major because they are “problem solvers.” Industry doesn’t expect new hires to make an impact in the company initially; they understand that the on the job training over the first few months is instrumental.

Work with post-secondary to amend computer science program of study to include more courses such as finance etc... to lead to a more well-rounded/versed candidate.

Hiring straight out of high school is a possibility, based on the candidate. Additional scrutiny would be placed on that candidate. One leader questioned how clients might receive an 18 or 19 year old (especially international clients); missing experience (not just programming/CS) that is gained in college.

Small start-up would hire without a degree, but put value in the college process.

Ms. Nichols (Acxiom) stated that teaming and problem solving at Acxiom is important. She recruits data scientists and thinkers outside the box. She looks for applicants with strong mathematics and good customer service skills. She further stated that new hires do not have to be college graduates, but the experience gained through it is very important and the company could hire an 18 year old for internship.

The most important thing a student would experience in a high school course in computer science?

Axiom summer institute allows students a chance to connect to each other within a broader educational experience. Github and other open source projects are a good community for students to connect with also.

Suggestions for the state include asking businesses to create five positions for this initiative in the form of mentorships. Industry credentials are important, but experience is still an important determining factor. Did you use these skills, or did you just go through a program and get the certificate by answering questions?

Did you use these skills, or did you just go through a program and get the certificate by answering questions? One employer stated a college graduate may not have all the skills needed for employment, but by completing college they have “learned how to learn.”

We need consumers of technology who also contribute to technology.

All employers feel internships are very important.

The following committee reports are attached:

Awareness

Resources

Curriculum and Professional Development

Metrics

Chair Hendren made closing remarks.

Upcoming Events in Computer Science and Technology:

The Arkansas Academy of Computing’s Annual Banquet and Business Meeting is set for October 9 and 10 in Little Rock

- See more at: <http://araoc.org/news/#sthash.Cx7J6gYy.dpuf>

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.